

# CATHOLIC THEATRE

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NATIONAL CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE

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## G. B. S. AND THE NUN

by SISTER MARGARET MARY, I.H.M.

*St. Mary Academy, Monroe, Michigan*

The Abbess of Stanbrook, St. Joan and George Bernard Shaw—what a combination! Naturally the inquisitive readers of the July issue of *THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY* turned to the article entitled: "The Nun and the Dramatist" and read with interest some of the correspondence here printed.

Dame Laurentia McLachlan, the Abbess of Stanbrook in Worcestershire was received into the Order of St. Benedict in 1884. By strange coincidence, George Bernard Shaw, in the presence of high-minded Socialists was enrolled in the Fabian Society on the same day. In 1907, Sydney, a mutual friend, was eager to have them meet but his problem was "how to get one whom all London was lionizing to the parlor of a strictly enclosed convent of nuns in the remote English village of Callow End?"

It was here that "St. Joan" was the link that bound these two spirits. In 1924, the play was produced, discussed everywhere, and received with high acclaim by both Catholics and Protestants. In a letter to Sydney Cockerell Sister Laurentia wrote: "I hear Bernard Shaw has written a play about St. Joan. Someone told me he said she was the first protestant! An odd kind of protestant—she was always appealing to the Pope." This was all he needed to talk Mr. and Mrs. Shaw into visiting the Abbess the following month.

From that time on, a series of letters, over a period of twenty-six years, was directed to her in which we get an insight into a character which prompted Chesterton to say of him: "There is always something about him which suggests that in a sweeter and more solid civilization he would have been a great saint."

After accompanying him on a visit to the Abbey, Cockerell remarked: "With Morris and your dear Abbess he was on his good behavior and seemed to admit that he was in the presence of a being superior to himself." Then too, what was it that caused him to discard the name of the

courageous, war-like George in favor of the gentle Abbot of Clairvaux and lover of our Lady and prompted him to sign himself "Brother Bernard" when writing to Sister Laurentia?

That Shaw had some belief in the power of prayer is evidenced in the frequent thoughts he penned, such as: "Nobody can tell what influence these prayers have. So let the sisters give me all the prayers they can spare; and don't forget me in yours" and again: "As I want you to go on praying for me I must in common honesty let you know

*(Continued on page fifteen.)*

### "Everything's Up To Date In Kansas City"

The big wheels of the convention are beginning to roll! St. Louis University's beloved Father Johnston is engineering the history-making affair, scheduled for June 13-15, 1957! Just to let you in on "snatch" of the program as it is shaping up, what about this? Special train out of Chicago! Republicans and Democrats have nothing on us! Evening Mass on June 15, followed by the usual convention banquet! Five hotels to stay at! Kansas City's magnificent AIR-CONDITIONED Convention Hall at our disposal for all sessions, exhibits, group meetings—business and social!! Workshops! Clinics! Panels! Demonstrations! Shows! Shows galore! Big whispers about theatre celebrities being around! University of Kansas practically around the corner!!! The TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY PARTY you can't afford to miss! Start planning now for JUNE in KANSAS CITY! By that time, they will have gone "about as fur as they kin go!" !!!

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## From the President's Desk . . .

Activities are rife in the National Catholic Theatre Conference with the opening of this new school year. Latest plans for regional meets in Milwaukee, New Jersey and California will provide increased interest in and support of Catholic Theatre.

Groundwork for November play festivals in Chicago and St. Paul promises that early planning will result in successful productions.

Enclosed with copies of the annual which have been mailed to all regular members are copies of the St. Genesius prayer which has been adopted by the Conference and the St. Genesius biography, "And God Hung a Star on His Dressing Room." Additional copies are available.

Watch CATHOLIC THEATRE for information about the National Convention, June 13, 14 and 15 in Kansas City. And, of course, we'll see you there!

*Sister Mary Angelita, D.V.M.*

## Royalty Reductions

EDITOR'S NOTE: In order to receive the Royalty Reductions it is advisable to apply to the Secretarial Office at least 30 days prior to production, otherwise there can be no assurance that a reduction can be secured.

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## PROFILE

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of "thumbnail sketches" of the folks who guide the destinies of our NCTC, having taken office at Notre Dame University, at the 1955 convention, and continuing in office until June, 1957. Just don't let the formidable record of Dr. Earl Bach frighten you! "Doc" Bach is a mighty personable gentleman. We are happy that he can manage to be a "WHO" in NCTC as well as in the WEST!)

### Biography—Earl C. Bach

as listed in

### "WHO'S WHO IN THE WEST"

Bach, Earl C., educator; b. Milwaukee, May 13, 1916; s. Charles H. and Frances Marie (Ropeter) Bach; A.B., Marquette U., 1937, M.A., 1938; Ph.D., U. of Denver, 1950; m. Clare M. Werle, Aug. 28, 1940 (dec. Oct. 31, 1947); children—Thomas Allen, Judith Ann, John Charles; m. 2nd Lorraine M. O'Meara, Dec. 27, 1948; child—Mary Christine; Teacher, Messmer High Sch., Milwaukee, 1936-38, Cathedral High Sch., Denver, 1938-41; Instructor, Sch. of Speech, Marquette U., Milwaukee, 1941-43; teacher, St. Francis de Sales High Sch., Denver, 1945-46; prof. of speech, St. Thomas Seminary, Denver, since 1945; prof. speech and drama, also Chair. speech and drama dept., Loretto Heights Coll., since 1945; indsl. relations mgr. War Manpower Commn., Kearney & Treckor Corp., Milwaukee, 1943-44; office mgr. Gates Rubber Co., Denver 1944-45; founder and dir. Nat. Catholic Communication Center; adv. bd. Loretto Heights College; Am. Assn. Speech Teachers, Nat. Ednl. Theatre Assn., Nat. Catholic Theatre Conf. (past regional dir.) (Nat. bd. of Directors); Jr. C. of C., Colo. Ednl. Assn. (past pres., speech sect.); Alpha Sigma Nu, Delta Sigma Rho. Roman Catholic. Knight of Columbus (past dist. dep. for Colo. State), (Colo. State Tres.); 4th Deg. K. of C., (past faith. navig.). Renowned orator and author numerous articles on profl. subjects. Home: 3410 So. Ash, Denver, Colo. Office: Loretto Heights Coll., Loretto, Colo.

### ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

Produced and Directed—39 Full-length Plays, 8 Musicals and "Carousel" in April, 3 Operas.

Sponsored and Conducted—6 Play Festivals for Catholic High Schools of the Archdiocese of Denver.

Sponsored and Conducted—8 Debate and Speech Conferences for Catholic High Schools of the Archdiocese of Denver.

Drama Critic for Chicago Catholic High School play festival in 1950.

Chairman and Host for the 9th Biannual Catholic Theatre Conference at Loretto Heights College, June, 1953.

(Continued on page thirteen.)



# I Liked Your Play, Father, It Was a Scream.

by REV. C. P. CROWLEY, C.S.B.

*Director, Assumption University Players, Assumption University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada*

It's funny how you get interested in theatre. As a boy I remember paying 6 cents on Saturday afternoons to see Tom Mix in some rousing Westerns at a little movie house on Bloor Street in the west end of Toronto; there was another movie close, but it cost 11 cents and that extra nickel looked pretty big in those days. Later I remember seeing Ted Lewis and Ken Murray at the old Pantages on Yonge Street. I can't remember seeing live drama though I have a vague

recollection of a Shakespeare play with a wrestler in it. All I can remember is the wrestler. Then after joining the Basilian Fathers and being stationed at St. Michael's College to finish my degree I got interested in helping Father Joe O'Donnell put on his plays in the high school and college departments. I didn't do much actually, except paint, carry flats, and hammer some carefully pointed out nails on some carefully pointed-out spots. (I say carefully pointed out because I'm no stagecraft man: a hammer has always upset me.) All I can remember of his direction is that he yelled a great deal, and polished key scenes until they glittered, on the theory that they would carry the rest of the play on their backs. Once he said that audibility was more than half the battle in amateur shows because if the play was good the lines would carry themselves. He was an explosive type of director who seemed to be on the verge of apoplexy half the time, but actually it was his way of making young actors open up and forget themselves. If he could get them angry he would go on happy that finally they had cut loose from their inhibitions.

Once he had acted Hamlet in College under the direction of the famous Father Charles Coughlin, and I suspect that there was a lot of Coughlin in him. One catty Basilian said that there was a lot of Hamlet in him too, and there might have been something in it, because he used to stride about the campus at St. Mikes in a long black cloak which he handled with great swirling flourishes in true Elizabethan style. Father O'Donnell has been out west for the past few years and is now a little too busy as President of St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon to do any more plays, though I hear that he is toying with the idea of another Hamlet. I mention him because he was the one who got me interested in drama, and how he did it came about in this way.

## A PLAN

We were on Strawberry Island one summer, where Basilian scholastics spend their vacation, and Father O'Donnell appeared one day with several copies of Macbeth and a plan. The plan was to prepare some likely young scholastic to take his place as high school director of dramatics. He approached me, fixed me with an unwavering eye and spoke: "I need someone with nerve who is not interested in public opinion, nor worried about attaining prestige in the Basilian community, and who is willing to be a slave to a most detested form of Basilian activity." He said nothing about talent. I don't know. It may have been the July weather, the lovely blue sky over Lake Simcoe, or the stillness, Parisian in its detachment. It may have been the O'Donnell eye. Whatever the reason, I capitulated and found myself reading Shakespeare with him in my first lesson in dramatics. We had only one

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lesson, because Father O'Donnell spent the rest of his vacation fishing for Lake Simcoe trout. He had caught one fish, and felt it an augury of a good piscatorial summer. It probably was.

Then came the Fall, the opening of school and my name on the notice board to handle high school dramatics. I'll never forget the first meeting. About 20 boys turned out, and I didn't know what to do with them. I believe we read some scenes, and I picked a play, *Room Service*, and away we went. The first rehearsal was chaotic, though in obedience to Father O'Donnell I had tried to block some action in what I laughingly called my prompt book. But the action seemed thin and dull, the movements obvious. As I look back on them they were thin and dull and obvious because I had moved my actors around with not sense of balance or dramatic effect, and certainly no feeling for the movements which underline the meaning of the script. I wasn't too good on picking characters either. The best actor in the school, Ted Hannon, didn't get a chance until one of the regulars angered me by missing two rehearsals in a row and I gave the other boy a chance to read and move about the stage a bit. He didn't take long to show even my inexperienced eye that he was a natural character actor. I remember too that I didn't foresee certain

potentialities for humor outside the script. Those were the horrible days when we used boys in girl roles, and Dan McCarthy (now producing seven shows a week for C.B.C.) was playing the role of the ingenue. Dan was good. He later played Grampa in *You Can't Take It With You*, and even then, I think he was only 15 years old, he could move an audience with his feeling for the pathos of a role. But Dan as an ingenue was something different. He sat on a sofa in a highly romantic moment receiving a gift of chocolates from his boy friend, (played by Michael Kirby later skating partner to Sonja Henie and Barbara Ann Scott). Dan opened the box, breathed hard to register feminine gratitude, picked out a large black chocolate daintily, and popped the whole thing into his mouth. The ladies in the audience haven't calmed down yet. I slipped back stage to tell him what happened, and in the next act he nibbled. The ladies caved in again. It only takes one, as an old baseball coach of mine used to say.

Then, in Detroit, at Catholic Central, Dick MacDonald (now a Holy Cross Brother) was playing the same role of Alice in the same play. I hadn't the courage in those days to do new plays. I was back stage waiting nervously for the second act to finish when suddenly a great shout of laughter

*(Continued on page twelve.)*

# CTC's "Twelfth Annual" Breaks All Precedents

(as reviewed by Sister Honora, O.P.)

In late August, the Children's Theatre Conference of AETA "came home" to the Northwestern University campus for its twelfth and largest annual convention. On hand for welcoming and active in the arrangement of program detail was fostering mother Winifred Ward herself—the dynamic little lady who founded the Conference at Northwestern in 1944.

CTC offered its usual five-day, jampacked program of high caliber sessions. Particularly good was the four-session technical workshop, covering all facets of production and climaxed by a model conference of all chiefs of production departments preparing a presentation of a typical play (for this workshop, "The Emperor's New Clothes").

But the most exciting offering by far was the series of demonstrations in Creative Dramatics, beginning with Mouzon Law's delightful session with the tots who had no previous experience with creative dramatics right through to Rita's Criste's skillful demonstration with a group of junior high school youngsters, introducing them to Shakespeare's *MACBETH* no less. This was the session wherein even the skeptics were "sold" on the payoff of a consistent program in creative playmaking as it is set up in the Evanston Public Schools.

By way of formal productions, "The Twelfth" was the "Treatin-est" of CTC conventions thus far—or so we think! There was the enjoyable evening of Dance theatre presented by Bob Moulton and his group from the University of Minnesota; Library Equity's production of Marty King's *PETER, PETER, PUMPKIN EATER*, which brought mixed reactions from the audience: directors recognized what happens when forms get mixed; the children who critiqued the show next day were unhappy with "the way the actors seemed to play down the audience," which just about hit the nail right on the thumb. Truly delightful were the two integrated creative dramatics projects done by children of the sixth grade level from the two different schools and under different leaders. The project on "Time" was dynamic. These children had really grasped the basic idea of drama, and they *had* it! Interesting to us of NCTC was the fact that this project was in reality a morality play. The second of these two projects "A Tapestry of the Eighteenth Century" was noteworthy especially for the fine voice work of the children and for skillful feeling for grouping, but we felt that in this project there happened what can happen in so many creative dramatic projects in the social studies: the whole thing was merely an animated history book. Somehow, the concept of conflict got missed or sidetracked. The potential seemed to be there, but it did not come



## MOPPET THEATRE

through. Obviously, though, the children had enjoyed what they had created.

Climaxing the convention was the never-to-be-forgotten production of that splendid medieval story, "The Boy Knight of Rheims" by the Children's Theatre of Evanston under the direction of Rita Criste. The actors were sixth, seventh, and eighth graders; the staging was done by the University department of drama. Again, training and experience in creative dramatics paid off huge dividends. The characterizations were so convincing. This was a tremendously moving piece of theatre. This was Children's Theatre as CTC has consistently insisted that it be: The best in story, in characterization, in setting, in costuming, in lighting, in music for our children.

Noteworthy, too, was the audience decorum at these various theatre productions. In every case, many, many children were present, of all ages, sizes, and degrees of sophistication. They were under no supervision. But these children surely knew how to attend the theatre. Evanston has every right to look back upon its past twenty-five years of children's theatre and creative dramatics as a form of training and as an activity that already is reaping a gratifying harvest in interest in theatre art.

It is impossible to review even in passing all the fine panels, talks, discussion sessions that went into making up the convention. Jim Popovich of University of Georgia is surely to be congratulated for his magnificent programming and for his meticulous attention to detail. Northwestern University is to be congratulated for its gracious welcome to all the convention-goers, but especially for its royal arrangements for the Religious who spent those five days on its campus.



But three observations remain to be made: Martha Bennet King, of the Miracle of Books Program, still has no peer in singing of ballads; the Ballet Celeste of San Francisco has a program that is a joy from beginning to end; members of NCTC would do well indeed to interest themselves in CTC and particularly in attending its annual convention. The place next August: Tufts College, near Boston, just before the AETA convention in Boston. Why not plan to take in both? The one membership in AETA will serve also for the membership obligations in CTC as well.

(Representing NCTC at the convention were: Sister Mary Angelita, BVM, President of NCTC; Sister Mary St. Genevieve, BVM, of Holy Angels, Milwaukee; Sister Mary Daniel, CSJ, and Sister Mary Romana, CSJ, together with Carmelita Schmelig of Fontbonne College, St. Louis; Sister Mary Agnese, SP, of Evanston; Sister Mary Judine, OSF, of Chicago (one of the cast of "The Complaining Angel" at Notre Dame this past summer!); Sisters Honora and Yvonne, of Racine; Therese Marie Cuny, Catherine Geary, Mary Gavin, of Chicago (Mary even took time out of wedding preparations to attend some of the sessions! Wedding day? Saturday, August 25! Congratulations!) Frances Carey Bowen of Baltimore. Sister Mary Fernanda, OSF, of Joliet, who operates her own children's theatre in that city, gave added representation to NCTC by her services on the Reception and Hostess committees. And not to be left out of the picture, Helen Coyle did the honors for Toledo!)

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# COLLEGE CALL BOARD

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following report reached the Editorial Office this past month. There will be a further report on the "Collegiate Dramatic Fraternity" in an early issue of CATHOLIC THEATRE.

## REPORT OF STUDENT DISCUSSION ON NATIONAL COLLEGIATE DRAMATIC FRATERNITY

(The report of the Committee on the National Collegiate Dramatic Fraternity was reviewed by Dr. Bach at a meeting of some 30 Catholic college students held June 17, 1956 at Mundelein College. The following is a report of the main questions comments, and suggestions raised in the course of the subsequent discussion.)

It was pointed out that the student's first allegiance is to the drama club, through which he is to work to the fraternity; and the fraternity is not meant to interfere with or supplant the campus drama club activities.

In view of this it was decided that the fraternity is to be a select group of leaders. It was then emphasized, though, that while the fraternity should consist of the best, it is not to be so selective that it excludes almost everyone.

Previously stated opinion that many schools would be unable to form or support their own chapters led to the suggestions that:

One chapter be formed for several schools within the same small area, or Regional chapters be formed which would accredit schools in their area.

The word "chapter" was clarified at this point. For our purposes, chapter is to be a term of accreditation and is not meant in the same sense applied by other fraternal organizations.

It was then decided that the fraternity is to be a single unit affair at first. This single unit is to be a national group which will accredit the qualifying schools, and will be called a chapter. A National Board of officers will be chosen from members of the fraternity.

It was emphasized that it is not necessary that the fraternity remain a single, national unit, since organization must at first be loose to start the fraternity and to promote the most effective growth. For example: the national group will divide into smaller chapters as soon as feasible. These chapters will probably be regional at first. The large campuses, which are active enough to form a separate chapter, will be allowed to do so and, if it is practical, the smaller schools nearby would be accredited by this chapter. These were discussed as possibilities.

Schools will be accredited academically according to the "A" and "B" classification set forth under "Framework of the National Collegiate Dramatic Fraternity" in the Committee's report. The "A" groups will include schools that meet the higher minimum requirements; the "B" groups will include schools that meet the lower minimum requirements. Each accredited school is to have a chairman who reports directly to the National Board of Officers.

The respective minimum requirements for the "A" and "B" classifications are to be settled after the survey of the schools is made to find the general academic pattern.

In view of some points brought out in the discussion, Dr. Bach pointed out that the means of financing the fraternity, as set forth in the Committee's report, would have to be reviewed. The question was left undeveloped because of lack of time.

The other requirements for a chapter were generally accepted as set forth in the Committee's report.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

### School Requirements

#### a) Academic

Certain courses must be offered on the drama curriculum.

#### b) Production

The school must sponsor at least one major production a year.

The standards of a school (the number of courses and productions) will determine whether it is classified in the "A" or "B" group. An application must be received, from the moderator of the drama group or department of a school asking to be accredited, stating the drama courses offered and the regular production schedule (which should include major and lab productions). Provision will be made for additional miscellaneous factors such as radio work, annual skits, etc.

### Individual Requirements

#### a) Academic

The student must have completed at least three courses dealing directly with drama.

The Questionnaires will finally determine what specific courses are to be required, but the suggested courses are:

- 1) Stagecrafts
- 2) History of the Theatre
- 3) Acting

(Continued on page fourteen.)



# OUTSTANDING PLAYS

*for non-professional production*

**G. K. Chesterton's *Father Brown Mystery*  
THE GREEN MAN**

Father Brown, the witty, kindly, and brilliant detective created by G. K. Chesterton, is presented here in an excellent and most exciting mystery. This is a new play—so new, in fact, that we have not yet received copies from our printer. However, it is expected soon, and if you order now, you'll be one of the first to receive it. Cast 6m, 5w.

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This beautiful and most colorful play from ancient China was especially adapted for the American stage, and was presented on Broadway with Mary Martin and Yul Brynner in the cast. It is available both as a musical (playbooks \$1.00 each, royalty on application) or in its original form as a straight play. The play without musical numbers has a cast of 9m, 6w, extras as desired.

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**Reginald Rose's  
TWELVE ANGRY MEN**

This tense and exciting jury-room drama has won an important national award for literary merit. It may be presented by an all-male cast (15m) or in the equally powerful all-girl cast (15w) under the title **TWELVE ANGRY WOMEN**.

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Jean and Walter Kerr prepared the deeply moving and utterly charming stage adaptation of Franz Werfel's famous novel. Your cast and audience will find the production of this play an important experience. Cast 7m, 11w, extras.

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**— Special Notice —**

The Rev. Gilbert V. Hartke, O.P., is preparing a play based on the delightful novel **THE LITTLE WORLD OF DON CAMILLO**. This play will be tried out under his direction at The Catholic University of America, and then released for production. If you wish, you may order a copy now. Your order will be kept on file and filled the moment we receive the playbooks from the printer. The royalty will be \$35.00 and playbooks will be 90¢ each.

## THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

179 N. Michigan Avenue

Chicago 1, Illinois

## PRODUCTION WORK SHEET

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Therese Marie Cuny's production notes for this play are given to our readers in their entirety despite Therese's pleadings that we cut mercilessly. But, in our editorial opinion, these notes are most valuable, not only to the veteran director, but especially to the director who may possess the sensitivity demanded for this good play but who may not feel entirely secure with production and costume problems. Miss Cuny's flawless directing is famous throughout the Chicagoland area. Readers will discover in this work sheet the kind of attention-to-detail that pays rich dividends in right production.*

**TITLE:** The Young and Fair.

**AUTHOR:** N. Richard Nash.

**TYPE:** Drama.

**CHARACTERS:** 21 women. More or less can be used.

**PUBLISHER:** Dramatists Play Service.

**ROYALTY:** \$35.00—\$25.00.

**EVALUATION:** This play has wide range-appeal in that it is well suited to college level but can effectively be played by high-school students, as well. There seems to be no age-limit in audience acceptance. Young people are as enthusiastic about it as are their elders. The plot holds interest throughout and offers real substance for thought.

**SYNOPSIS:** The story centers about a young teacher, idealistic and ambitious. She meets and battles disillusionment and failure meted out to her by the Principal of Brook Valley School for Girls. Her battleground is provided by Dru, a twisted and jealous girl who uses her younger sister Patty as a foil to tear down all that she is trying to do. Patty herself proves to be more than a child in her attitude toward difficulty and accusation. Lee, a Jewish girl, who has concealed her race in order to gain admittance into the school, and Nancy Gear, a maladjusted young girl who becomes an unwitting tool in the hands of Dru, also figure in this battle to save hearts and heads. A theft of some valuable articles, racism, and the fitting of ideals into the pattern of every day living—all these are features that make **THE YOUNG AND FAIR** an entertaining, gripping and thoroughly worthwhile production. It is a timely comment on idealism and personal ethics.

**PRODUCTION:** (I) The simplest type of production is a dark draped background, with doorways set wherever drapes permit and action dictates. Of the three scenes, the Student Lounge is used less frequently but calls for the largest number of characters on stage. It is suggested that Office and Bedroom scenes use right and left half of stage with Student Lounge scenes played in center, spreading over to R and L. In this way most furniture essential to Office and Bedroom

scenes can remain in place and only the few pieces near center stage will need removal for Lounge scene. The students can carry tennis racquets, musical instruments, etc., and thus provide a semblance of a Lounge with props rather than with furniture. In this space-staged arrangement, care need be given to lights which must spot only the acting areas. Levels provide excellent opportunities for pictures, especially with large groups. A permanent arrangement of platforms can be worked out that will set off scene-area to better advantage. Furniture can be either traditional or modern. In either case it is suggested that much color be employed to avoid the possibility of a drab and uninteresting setting.

(II) The script offers an arrangement of scenery and furniture that requires no change or removal of furniture. It suggests a half-wall or room divider. If the rooms are to be extremely modern, these dividers can be made with the use of poles or thin, flat 1 x 4's set like vertical blinds in the fashion of today's interior decorating. This script arrangement, while providing no problem in change of scenery or props, seemed too confined for the Student Lounge. If, however, few students are to be used in this scene, this objection would not hold. These half-walls could be movable or stationary.

(III) A third type of setting calls for revolving unit set on R stage which can be set with one wall of the Student Lounge and on reverse side, wall of the Bedroom. The other flats on stage to which these two scenes fit should be of harmonizing, but not necessarily matching colors. The revolving unit, built about 8 inches from floor, is set into platforms that cover almost the entire right half of stage. On the opposite side, the office scene was set up on a square platform 8" high measuring about 14' x 14' and mounted on casters that enabled it to be pushed either offstage Left or preferably to UL corner where, with lights off on that area, it was practically unseen. The office scene was rolled aside only to offer more playing space in the center for the Student Lounge scenes. A long, low bench or large round ottoman placed R of C in office setting—then L of C for Bedroom scenes—gives a feeling of these scenes spreading farther and offering more playing area if desired. It eliminates a confined feeling that sometimes suggests the characters may not cross the line. Because it is sometimes difficult to keep the light from spilling beyond the acting area, it seems wise to place a piece of furniture like this beyond the line and thus deliberately "carry over" into what space can be seen.

In a production done in this manner, at Academy of Our Lady, desert tones—sand, rust, red-brown were utilized—with aqua and purple for contrast. Instead of the traditional Gothic effect so commonly used for action in a school, a completely modern setting and decor were employed. This seemed justified by the fact that this was an ultra-modern finishing school. It also offered a more effective setting and proved a

challenging and interesting piece of work for the crews. All walls were severely plain, doors flat with little or no wood molding, but brilliant colors were boldly used in a Harlequin pattern on the walls of the Student Lounge. In the bedroom scenes, highlights were supplied by orange bedspreads and numerous little pillows in harmonizing and contrasting colors. Stark white pendant bubble lamps were suspended over the two beds. The office, though most conservative of the three sets, was also modern. Walls of aqua spattered with rust supplied background for a large ebony-finish island desk, two chairs in black finish, and a triple-spot-light floor lamp. A long bench built on black iron U legs with boxed pillow top completed the set.

**COSTUMES:** Since most of the characters are Junior college students, the usual tailored dresses and skirts with sweaters or blouses will be worn. Care should be taken, however, to avoid monotony in color and line. An attempt should be made to use color combinations that will effectively set off characters and their types and give prominence to those who play focal parts in scenes. There is a real danger of relaxing on this facet of production in permitting girls to just "wear whatever they would," forgetting theatrical effect and the value of correct color and line. An unusual piece of jewelry, belt, or a colorful scarf can do much to an otherwise plain outfit. It also helps to identify characters—not an easy thing when a large group appears in scenes. If the play is to be performed against draped background, vivid and varied colors will supply for the lack of color in setting. Mrs. Cantwell should be costumed as a woman of simple but very good taste. Suits and wool dresses of smart but matronly line best suit her type. Avoid round collars, small collars, short jackets, any features in dress that tend to make her look young. Long or three-quarter length sleeves will hide youthful elbows and arms. Dru's wardrobe should always be outstanding, reflecting the wealthier atmosphere from which she comes. By no means, however, should she be over-dressed. Rather, her clothes suggest the best of taste with a slight flare for the dramatic.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** There are many scenes that, unless expertly interpreted and acted, can prove wordy and tiresome. It is suggested that these scenes be cut, (All changing in a script should have permission of publisher). In a few places, whole scenes can be eliminated without effecting the story or hurting the action of the play. To many readers, the last scene seem anti-climactic. This scene, as well as the first scene in the play which is purely expository, can be condensed into a short monologue to be given by Frances Moritt, over the loudspeaker. With lights dimmed, her voice reminiscing briefly over the episodes of the play—supposedly from the past—places the audience in a more receptive mood when the curtain opens and finds them already aware of earlier facts. When curtain opens then, the stage is ready for action rather than explanation.

A sketch of proposed settings can be procured from CTC office.

## CATHOLIC THEATRE CLINIC

sponsored by *The New Jersey Area of the National Catholic Theatre Conference*

### FRANCIS JORDAN AUDITORIUM

Mother of the Savior Seminary, Blackwood, New Jersey

November 1, 1956

8:00 A.M. REGISTRATION—Lobby of Francis Jordan Auditorium

Sr. M. Catherine Denis, O.P., Mt. St. Dominic Academy, Caldwell, *Registrar*

9:10 A.M. CONVOCATION—Auditorium

Rev. Robert J. O'Connell, S.J., *Clinic Chairman*

St. Peter's College, Jersey City, *College Representative*

Sr. Louise Bertrand, C.S.J., *Membership Promoter*

Wildwood Catholic High School, *High School Representative*

Rev. Gabriel Stapleton, S.D.S., *Clinic Programmer*

Mother of the Savior Seminary, Blackwood, *State Chairman*

10:10 A.M. ACHIEVING BETTER SPEECH—Auditorium

Miss Gertrude Walsh, Hunter and Ladycliff Colleges, New York, author of *Singing Your Way to Better Speech*

11:10 A.M. ART AND MORALITY OF THE THEATRE—Music Room

Rev. Paul C. Perrotta, O.P., Caldwell College, Founder of Genesian Actress Guild

Mrs. Christopher Wyatt, *Drama Critic*

MAKE-UP PROBLEMS AND NEW MATERIAL Auditorium

Mr. Alvin Cohen, Paramount Cosmetics, New York

12:00 P.M. LUNCHEON RECESS—Seminary Dining Hall

1:10-3:00 P.M. WORKSHOP IN PLAY DIRECTION Room 12

Mr. Roy Irving, St. Peter's College, Jersey City, formerly of Gateway Theatre, Dublin

1:10-2:00 P.M. CONSTRUCTION OF STAGE SCENERY—Auditorium

Mr. Donald Waters, St. Joseph's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland

2:10-3:00 P.M.—ACTING TECHNIQUES—Music Room Teddy Marie Handfield

2:10-3:00 PUBLICIZING THE NON-PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION

Mr. Bernard Simon, Director of Package Publicity Service

3:10-4:30 WORKSHOP IN STAGE LIGHTING Auditorium

Mr. Donald Waters

WRITING THE TV SCRIPT

(Representatives of WFIL-TV, WCAU-TV, and WRCV-TV, Philadelphia, Pa.)

Margaret Mary Kearney, Educational Director, WCAU-TV

5:00 P.M. SOLEMN BENEDICTION—Seminary Chapel

Closing Prayer to St. Genesius

EXHIBITS—8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.—Gymnasium



## I LIKED YOUR PLAY, FATHER

(Continued from page five.)

went up from the audience. I don't mind laughter, generally, but in this case the scene was supposed to be serious. Later I found out that Alice had gone up the stairs when her rich boy friend came in, but to do it conveniently had hitched up his skirts and taken the steps two at a time. Dick had a gift for comedy, but I preferred his using it in relation to the script. Of course it doesn't matter in some plays: *Suds in Your Eye*, for instance. I'll never forget the episode of the purse. Now when three girls play the leads in a comedy, and at one point they have to open a purse, you naturally do not anticipate trouble. Girls know about purses. But not in *Suds in Your Eye*. The time came when the purse had to be opened, and I could see from the back of the auditorium that there was something going on that I had not planned. Helen Canniff, our Miss Tinkham, wrenched, pulled, twisted and finally flung the purse to another girl and turned her convulsive face away from the audience. The other girl, a husky farm girl, put the purse on the ground, placed one foot on it and ripped it apart. It turned out that the fringe on the edge of the purse had caught in the zipper and everything stopped except the laughter of the audience.

### IT WAS A SCREAM

It seems to me as I look back on first plays that I had the impression that they were pretty good. Everybody would come up to me afterwards and say: "I really enjoyed your play. It was a scream. A real scream." And I would ask, modestly, "What part did you enjoy most of all?" They would answer, "The part where the door knob came off." This puzzled me, because I had never rehearsed the door knob. It always seemed to happen. Of itself. My door knobs had initiative and a sturdy independence, but after awhile I began to resent them, and I began to resent plays that were just screams. As I helped the University drama club I noticed that certain plays when done well—and Father O'Donnell did them well—had an effect that my Broadway comedies didn't have. There was Chesterton's *Magic* with its atmosphere of another world; Sidney Howard's *The Late Christopher Bean* moving in its tenderness and gripping in its study of greed; and Henri Gheon's *Marriage of St. Francis* with its insights into the Franciscan religious spirit. All of them had moments that seemed almost magical. It wasn't an emotional thing; rather it was something that awakened me to an awareness of life. As I saw more and more plays I was more and more impressed with this quality. These plays reaffirmed ideals that were somehow linked with the dignity and

destiny of man. Their inevitable effect was to create in me a feeling of exaltation that seemed to transcend time and place: the feeling I had when I walked along the streets on Christmas Eve with my parents years ago, with the snow crackling under my feet, and we entered the Church and saw the Crib, and happiness seemed so close that it could never go away.

It is my firm conviction now that plays of this kind are the best religious plays: whether they deal with ultimate values implicitly (as in the plays of Eliot or Wilder), or essentially as in the more obvious treatments of the relations between God and man (the plays of Gheon and Claudel). I feel now that "religious" plays as commonly understood quite often do not have this magic. You know the kind I mean: plays with a priest singing High Mass like Frank Sinatra or nuns playing in the blackfield. I've never quite warmed up to *The Song of Bernadette* or *The Velvet Glove* for this reason. "Religious" plays as we usually understand them are often too obviously moral, with characters thinly drawn, plot hackneyed, and solutions that make every one happy and theologically comfortable. They have theological truth in them, I admit, but it is truth that becomes almost a character walking the stage. It is not concertized, not made incarnate so that the emotional situation holds you until the truth explodes like a bomb. A religious play in this sense does not open a door into the truth because the key to the door is on the stage and the door has been opened from the beginning. In another play you might have had a vision of glory to hold you enthralled like a child seeing a Christmas tree on Christmas morning. Instead you are like a child who has a forest of fir trees in the backyard all year, and pine needles on the floor of the living room every day.

### IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY

I'm sure now that plays that have this magic are not only the most satisfying, they are also the most likely to develop you as a director and your students as actors. I felt that when I directed Giraudoux' *The Madwoman of Chaillot* a few years ago. The *Madwoman* is a profoundly religious play, though on the surface it appears to be an amoral fantasy. The central figure, Countess Aurelia, an eccentric old lady,

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opposes evil as she sees it in the form of a group of French business men. They are shadow men, half-men, greedy for power, haters of culture and civilization. At the end of the play the Countess brings about their death, and the world of Chaillot is filled with a new light and a new happiness. On the surface the play is certainly a fable or fantasy, but on another level it is a profoundly philosophical play treating lightly and symbolically important concepts of the nature of man. The fascinating thing about it is its technical challenge which, if met successfully, will do more to awaken the audience to its values than a more obvious play. It certainly has a meaning and that meaning must be established in every possible way.

*In every possible way.* Here is the challenge to the director. I found that to establish the ambivalence of meaning I had to brood over ways and means right from the beginning. First, there were the sets: one an outdoor scene in front of a French cafe, the other, indoors in the cellar of the Madwoman. I decided they couldn't be completely realistic: there had to be an element of the fairy tale about them. I tried doing the cafe scene in charcoal and yellow-awnings and table-cloths-with the cellar scene in dull brooding blues. The dark atmosphere of the cellar provided a nice contrast later when I suffused it with a warm rose-flavored light to suggest the new world of peace and love diffused by the mad wisdom of the Countess. The vivid coloring of the cafe scene did give a nice atmosphere for the light quickly moving action of the first act, but as I think back over it, a completely impressionistic set might have been more in keeping with the element of fantasy. I used different levels here wherever I could to enliven the stage pictures and to aid in suggestion the symbolic natures of my characters: goodness sweeping from the higher levels and so on. Even the curtain call managed to continue this symbolism, with actors coming like gremlins from underground, behind the great central bed, through the side doors, and down from the upper level—symbolic of forces of good and evil as an eager graduate student later told me. I found the use of various levels a big aid in giving the action variety and pace, and increasing, not only the interest of the stage pictures but the visibility of the play for our audience which had to sit on a flat auditorium floor.

I've always loved the poetry in the play, and had determined to point it up in every way possible, but I was afraid of artificiality, of having my actors being obviously poetical, looking for the poetry first. I found that by concentrating on the dialogue as if it were extremely realistic prose, worrying about the inflections, the cadences, and the ordinary rhythms, that my young actors spoke the lines as they would speak in real life—at first. Then gradually, and it was a slow process, the meaning came through, and then by some psychological miracle the subtlety crept in and I found the language being transmuted into poetry. I think now that meaning is most important to the poetry of a drama—even to a Fry verse drama. If the actors do not understand and communicate the

*(Continued on page fourteen.)*



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## PROFILES

*(Continued from page three.)*

Member of the Executive Board and Chairman of Religious Drama of the Rocky Mountain Theatre Conference.

Director for 2 years of Marquette University Radio Workshop during which time 60 half hour original dramatizations were presented.

Currently working on a college honors society for NCTC college and university member groups.

## With the Editors . . .

By way of explanation—regarding

*Student Membership.* On the advice of the NCTC Board of Directors, *Catholic Theatre* subscriptions begin with the October issue and terminate with the May issue. Because many directors find it impossible to get the student subscriptions in to the Secretarial Office early in the school year, an AMPLE supply of this issue is on file in the Editorial Office. . . . 1800 copies! CATHOLIC THEATRE will be sent to student members as long as the supply lasts!

*Production Notices.* The notice concerning the productions that YOU have "on the board" will be listed in the section of the Bulletin under one of the following: COMMUNITY CORNER, COLLEGE CALL BOARD, STRICTLY TEEN, or PUPPET THEATRE. Only recent or future scheduled productions will be listed. Please let the editors know as soon as possible the names of the productions you plan to give.

Sister Elizabeth Seton, O.P.  
Co-Editor

## I LIKED YOUR PLAY, FATHER

(Continued from page thirteen.)

sense of the speeches the poetry will be nothing but "sound and fury" as Fry plays so often are in amateur hands. In the *Madwoman* the poetry inherent in the very structure of the play is one of the means that helps the symbolic meaning to come through to the audience. Of course you can and should use other devices to clarify the meaning, and I did, even by experimenting with my grouping and crowd reactions on certain key lines and speeches. The reactions of the group seemed to help heighten the beauty of the Countess's famous speech, "To be alive is to be fortunate," or the satire of the Ragpicker's immortal, "To have money is to be virtuous, honest, beautiful and witty." I think this reaction of a crowd of listeners which may seem like ordinary stage business, but which I prefer to think of as ritual, is a very big help to pinpoint key emotions and concepts in lengthy monologues.

I know that a more experienced director would have given the play greater depth than I did, but I found myself rallying right from the beginning to meet the challenge of the symbolism in this most unusual play. I became conscious that it was a French conversation-piece which had to be translated into action for my Windsor audiences. We Canadians share in the American dislike of talky plays. Whether I met the challenge successfully I don't know, but I do know that my audience talked about the play afterwards—vehemently—either in praise or dislike. I heard phrases like, "It was too talky," "I didn't know what it meant, but I enjoyed it," etc. But one professor studying labor problems with his students lectured for a week on the play, calling it one of the most significant plays he had ever seen. And the local drama critic of the Windsor Daily Star pleased me by commenting on the viciousness of its satirical portrayal of world-wide officialdom, and the sensitivity that gave credibility to the two levels of meaning running through it.

Well, I'm a long way from door-knobs at this point, and I hope I'm a long way from door-knobs on the stage, too. If I am I think doing difficult plays may have had something to do with it. I really believe that the way to grow is to take a good hard play and make yourself and your actors stretch to meet it. Cheap entertaining plays are never as rewarding as difficult plays. With them nothing ever really happens on the stage: no magic moment, no insights into any ultimate vision, because there is no vision in the play in the first place. I've found all I needed in a good play right in the text itself: ideas, business, pace, rhythm, beauty. They are all there, and so is the magic. I think you develop as a director, and your students improve as actors when you meet the challenge of a good script. It makes you work and think and imagine in a kind of aesthetic give-and-take. At least that has been my experience since that first summer on Strawberry Island when Father Joe O'Donnell hypnotized me, and the vow of obedience did the rest.

## COLLEGIATE DRAMATIC FRATERNITY

(Continued from page eight.)

### b) Production

The student must merit at least 50 points according to the point system finally adopted by the fraternity by filling at least the minimum requirements in each of four areas of activity.

The suggested areas of activity are:

- 1) Acting
- 2) Directing
- 3) Business
- 4) Production

There is a possibility of meriting extra points for allied activities such as Community theatre, T.V., Radio, Summer Stock, etc.

It was suggested that since many cannot direct until at least the Junior year, the directing area of the point system be left to the high honor sector of the fraternity. The point was left open for further discussion.

For the present, at least, induction into the fraternity may take place, for an individual who has merited it, by the end of the Sophomore year. (It was asked when members would regularly be inducted into the fraternity and suggested that this should take place at the regional and national conventions, with mention made at the national conventions of those who had been inducted at the regional conventions. The question was left undecided.)

### Group Requirements

- 1) The paid membership of each individual, beginning in the sophomore year, at least, (Provision is to be made in the Constitution for charter members, such provision to state in effect that "Individual Membership in NCTC is required for one year prior to application into the fraternity, except in the case of charter members.")
- 2) A membership drive for NCTC
- 3) Attendance at the Regional and National conventions
- 4) Supporting NCTC Publications by sending in club and department news. (It was suggested that each school have a Corresponding Secretary for NCTC.)
- 5) Sponsorship of one group activity or project for NCTC a year. (It was suggested that this be a drama day or some such specifically dramatic activity.)

At the end of the meeting one of the students expressed disappointment that the fraternity was not harder to get into, and that it was possible to be accepted before one was a Senior in college. It was again emphasized that the beginning organization must be very elastic and perhaps less demanding than we would like it to be since we must start somewhere. The point was conceded.



## G.B.S. AND THE NUN

(Continued from page one.)

*To say that the writer of this article needs no introduction to members of NCTC may indeed be true, but such a statement would, we think, be rather unfair. Directors of high caliber plays, directors whose devotion to the cause of fine theatre has been constant, directors whose ready service to NCTC through the years has been an inspiration and an encouragement to everyone in the organization—such directors need to be introduced over and over again. Sister Margaret Mary, IHM, of St. Mary Academy, Monroe, Michigan, is just such a director. Happily, we offer for your perusal this material which Sister Margaret Mary, in her characteristic fashion, has bothered to gather into capsule format for those of us who may have missed up on the article in ATLANTIC MONTHLY.*

what you are praying for." Upon her election as Abbess he wished that she "have as little to do as possible except keep people's souls clean, as you help to keep that of your erring and worldly Brother Bernard."

What is very significant in this collection of letters is that while much of the correspondence of Sister Laurentia was not retained, the letters in which "he comes to grips with something greater than mere intellectual power" are saved and now published. On one occasion she "Challenged him to define what he meant by Free thought. She suspected that his Free thought was synonymous with false thought—truth alone makes a man free." Her strenuous objection to "The Black Girl" showed that she felt "utterly crushed and humiliated when she saw the open rejection of our Lord's divinity and the mockery of the Crucifix by one whom she had come to regard as a dear friend."

After the correspondence of the two over the "Black Girl," written in 1932, G.B.S. in his own words never dared to show his face in Stanbrook. Upon the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 1934, Dame Laurentia, acting upon the counsel of Archbishop Williams, made the first move in favor of reconciliation. In 1944, for her Diamond Jubilee, he dispatched his latest production "Everybody's Political What's What?" with this on the title-page:—

"Look at my portrait: it was taken this year. You would still know me if you met me. I wish you could. I count my days at Stanbrook among my happiest."

The editor of the CATHOLIC WORLD in its August issue discussed "Why Shaw Never Became a Catholic." He said: "Ultimately the explanation lies in the mystery of divine grace," at the same time he places the responsibility upon us—that we should study "the psychology of how to instruct inquirers."

The full import of this correspondence will be found in the forth-coming book: "In a Great Tradition" printed by permission of the present Abbess of Stanbrook, the Public Trustee and the Society of Authors.

As members of a group dedicated to the Catholic Theatre shouldn't we redouble our prayers and sacrifices, our studies and endeavors to present the best in drama so that through this medium we may be better qualified to interest and at the same time challenge personalities in the theatrical world to forsake the false and accept the TRUTH?

## The Brave One

*Note from the Editor: The following communication was received in the Editorial Office from RKO Radio Pictures.*

Within a few weeks, an extraordinary motion picture called THE BRAVE ONE will be shown in neighborhood theatres. Filmed entirely in Mexico, it is the simple and heart-warming story of a little boy who raises a pet bull—and his successful efforts to save his pet from death in the bull-ring.

The wholesomeness and piety reflected in THE BRAVE ONE have caused the film already to win the coveted Parents' magazine "Award of Merit," and enthusiastic praise in the September issue of THE SIGN magazine. Many Catholic priests who have seen THE BRAVE ONE in New York have commented on the film's beautiful portrayal of the touching religious faith of the little Mexican boy and his family.

Watch for this A-1 film at your theatre.

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JUNE, 1957

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**Step 1** Completely cover object with patches of tinfoil. A dab of "Celastic" parting agent holds tinfoil in place. (tinfoil acts as a separator)



**Step 2** From roll of "Celastic" tear small swatches, dip into "Celastic" softener then immediately apply over tinfoil. (only one layer is necessary)

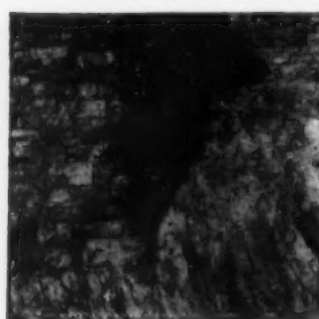


**Step 3** When object is completely covered with "Celastic" and thoroughly dry slit the "Celastic" with razor and remove the "Celastic" shell.



**Step 4** Here is "Celastic" head, removed from the model which was originally covered with tinfoil. Finish by taping slit with strips of "Celastic."

Duplicate all or part of the scenes below with the new "Celastic" and tinfoil copy method.



Reproduce Stone Masonry, Rocks



Reproduce Spanish tile roof, archway, fountain, column



Reproduce rock formation



Reproduce tree with beautiful bark texture

3193

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